

FURTHER RECORDS OF THE SANDWICH TERN *STERNA SANDVICENSIS*
ON THE NORTH KENYA COAST

P.L. Britton

The Sandwich Tern is a rare bird on the east coast of Africa north of Natal, and there are only three previous records from East Africa, two of them from Kenya (see Britton 1974). Further records of adults in winter plumage from three localities north of Mombasa between August 1976 and February 1977 are of considerable interest. All were seen at close range in company with Lesser Crested Terns *S. bengalensis*. The distinctive bill colouration was noted in a few cases.

Sabaki River mouth: 3 on 12 August, P.L.B. & H.A. Britton;
4 on 3-4 September, H. Pelchen (*in litt.*).
Ras Ngomeni: 1 on 27 September, Dr J.S. Ash (*in litt.*).
Ras Iwetine: 1 on 15 February, P.L.B. & H.A.B.

REFERENCE

BRITTON, P.L. 1974. Sandwich Tern on the Kenya coast. *EANHS Bulletin* 1974: 30-31.

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AN INJURED SANDERLING *CALIDRIS ALBA*
IN BREEDING PLUMAGE AT MOMBASA

P.L. Britton & H.A. Britton

A Sanderling in full breeding plumage at Ras Iwetine, Nyali Beach, on 6 July 1976 is noteworthy in the absence of previous records of partially or completely moulted birds (see Britton & Britton 1976). It had a broken leg, and a limping bird at the same site on 5 August 1976, partially moulted out of breeding plumage, was probably the same individual. This species over-summers regularly in scores or hundreds on the Kenya coast, but all over-summering birds of this and other Palaearctic wader species appear to be immature, retaining sub-adult or winter plumage. Adults of other common species, like the Grey Plover *Pluvialis squatarola* and Curlew Sandpiper *C. ferruginea*, commonly moult into partial or complete breeding plumage in April or May each year, prior to departure for their Arctic breeding grounds. Jackson (1938) mentions Sanderlings collected on Manda Island (250 km north of Ras Iwetine) in breeding dress in April, and some examined closely by D.J. Pearson (*in litt.*) at Watamu in April 1977 showed traces of rufous amongst the feathers of the upperparts and crown. Both sexes have active rôles in courtship behaviour, which may begin within a few days of their arrival on the breeding grounds (Parmalee & Payne 1973), so that pre-nuptial moult of Kenyan birds is likely to take place on passage.

The injury sustained by this bird is important in evaluating the record. Save for this leg injury it would presumably have migrated northwards, moulting en route. The record suggests that pre-nuptial moult is part of a well synchronised endogenous rhythm, independent of parochial stimuli, and that adult birds delayed by injury moult to nuptial dress irrespective of their location.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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EANHS Bulletin 1976: 52-61.
- PARMALEE, D.F. & PAYNE, R.B. 1973. On multiple broods and the breeding strategy of arctic Sanderlings. *Ibis* 115: 218-226.

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THE BLACK-TAILED GODWIT *LIMOSA LIMOSA* IN UGANDA

Margaret Carswell

On 27 November 1975 a Black-tailed Godwit was seen at Mabamba Swamp on the west side of Entebbe peninsula (32°20'E., 00°04'N.). The bird was approached closely and seen well with binoculars, both standing and in flight, and the following field notes were made:

Large, compared to the other waders present; very long straight bill, dark in colour, reddish at the base; legs blackish grey; upperparts fairly pale greyish buff; below paler off-white. In flight: white upper tail coverts and upper part of the tail, the white not going up the back; fairly broad black band near the end of the tail; axillaries white; white wing bar.

Mann (1976) states that the Black-tailed Godwit is recorded, but with no details, from Ruwenzori National Park (formerly Queen Elizabeth National Park) and from Kaberega National Park (formerly Murchison Falls National Park).

The present record has appeared in the *Uganda Society Bird Newsletter* No. 57 of January 1976.

REFERENCE

- MANN, C.F. 1976. Some recent changes in our knowledge of bird distribution in East Africa. *Journal of the East Africa Natural History Society & National Museum* 157: 1-24.

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Received 16 April 1977.

EXCEPTIONAL NUMBERS OF BLACK-TAILED GODWITS

LIMOSA LIMOSA WINTERING AT LAKE NAIVASHA DURING 1976/77

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Backhurst, Britton & Mann (1973) described the Black-tailed Godwit as a regular visitor in very small numbers to inland localities in Kenya and Tanzania; the largest party recorded was a flock of 15-20 birds at Suguta Naibor (0°40'N., 36°37'E.). There is only one definitive record for Uganda (Carswell 1977).

In the northern winter of 1976/77, Black-tailed Godwits were present continuously from November to March at Lake Naivasha in hitherto unprecedented numbers for a locality south of the equator. Monthly counts, which I made in the company of T. Kallqvist, along a transect of the northern beach of Crescent Island (all at midday) are as follows: date of visit in brackets: August (8), 0; September (29), 0; October no count; November (30), 5; December (30), 48; January (24), 56; February (16), 15; March (21), 2; April (28), no godwits seen.